

April 15, 2025

Re: *In re Collegiate Athlete NIL Litigation*, Case No. 4:20-cv-03919-CW

Dear Judge Wilken,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share my story as an objector in Oakland last Monday. The opportunities to be a part of this settlement have been extremely formative and eye-opening.

I can tell that you desire to make the right decision. This morning I woke up to a document from the principals that told me, while I and the others had been heard, no changes had been made to represent our situations in this settlement. There is a significant difference between being “heard” and being “fairly represented.”

One distinct false premise jumped off the page at me: the brief claims that “grandfathering” would cause “significant disruption,” but they offer no explanation. In fact, “grandfathering” would maintain the status quo. They also ignore that implementing the roster limits would cause far greater “significant disruption,” uprooting plans, dreams, and hard work. If their goal was truly no “significant disruption,” then the roster limits would not be a facet of this settlement. “Significant disruption” is a perfect description of the tears, anxiety, stress, and fear as rescinded roster spots and impending and present roster cuts hang over the heads of high school and college student athletes like me and my friends. Please, Your Honor, do not forget that the lack of changes made to this settlement despite your admonition to do so is also a continuation of the “significant disruption” caused since the preliminary approval of this settlement.

After the hearing last week, I spoke with the coach who had rescinded my roster spot. She reaffirmed that she still wants me on the team. She only rescinded my spot because of the incoming roster limits. This is the story of thousands of current and recruited athletes in my position. We had roster spots that were guaranteed by coaches for the duration of our college careers (regardless of our injuries and performances). These coaches are committed to growing us as athletes, as leaders and as individuals, rather than just squeezing out performance. Universities had no plans to change roster sizes until this settlement materialized. For many of us, the scholarship is the “cherry on top,” while the roster spot is a shot at our dreams.

Please do not just “grandfather me in” nor forget about the “10 year old playing kickball on the asphalt.” Because those kids will be affected, too. Instead, please tell us that the roster limits will not be a portion of this settlement through a court order, so that we can plan our lives, register for classes, find a roommate, and run toward our dreams.

Sincerely,
Gracelyn Lee Laundermilch
NCAA ID# 2306927455